

of a buoyant economy in Europe, the economic recession in Canada, and the government's efforts to discourage the entry of unskilled workers, immigration fell off drastically in these years, plunging to 71,689 in 1961, its lowest level since 1947. As the Canadian economy continued on its sluggish course, unions clamoured for a decrease in immigration and the government set about reducing the number of immigration officers staffing Canadian immigration offices abroad.

Another sour note was struck by the arrival of soaring numbers of unqualified people, who sought to circumvent the criteria for unsponsored immigrants. After entering Canada as visitors, they contacted influential people or organizations and then applied to stay permanently. This seemingly intractable problem was overshadowed by large-scale illegal Chinese immigration, aided and abetted by a Hong Kong-based industry that purchased and sold false identities. In an attempt to deal with the question of illegal Chinese immigration, the government, in June 1960, announced an amnesty for all Chinese who had entered the country illegally before July 1, 1960. But although many thousands of "illegals" did come forward and declare themselves, the program did not succeed in banishing illegal immigration rings.

During her term as minister of citizenship and immigration, Ellen Fairclough also saw the unwelcome reverse side of immigration come to the fore. Disillusioned by their experiences in Canada, and by the lack of job opportunities here, one in every three or four immigrants either returned to his or her country of origin or emigrated to the United States. Especially worrisome to Canadians was the movement southward of thousands of native-born Canadians, many of whom were well-educated and intelligent members of the professional and business classes. In 1961, an estimated 25 percent of the wage-earners among the 70,553 Canadians who left for the U.S. were professionals and managers.⁸ There had always been a large annual exodus to Canada's neighbour south of the border, but what made the issue so significant in the 1960s was the increasingly high proportion of emigrants that this country could ill afford to lose. Doctors, trained businessmen, university professors, and scientists were leaving Canada in greater numbers than ever before. Not until the time of the Vietnam War and race riots in the United States would there be a reversal of this "brain drain" and then it would be only temporary.

Notwithstanding the gloomy immigration scene in the late fifties and early sixties, Ellen Fairclough made a significant contribution to her department during the turbulent years that she was at its helm. One knowledgeable observer impressed by her performance was Prof. David Corbett, the noted Canadian immigration expert. Writing in the *International Journal*, he praised Mrs. Fairclough for her "flexible interpretation of regulations and liberal use of ministerial powers" and applauded the "steady improvement of the Immigration Service and its procedures" under the minister. In addition to these accomplishments, however, was an achievement of even greater significance: a long overdue and radical reform that virtually abolished the White Canada immigration policy.

It was introduced to the public on January 19, 1962 when Ellen Fairclough tabled new regulations in the House that eliminated racial discrimination as a major feature of Canada's immigration policy. Henceforth any unsponsored immigrants who could satisfy the Department of Citizenship and Immigration that they had the requisite education, skill, or other qualifications were to be considered suitable for admission, irrespective of race, colour, or national origin, provided they were able to support themselves until they found employment or were coming to take a specific job. In only one respect did the new regulations retain any vestiges of discrimination and that was in the provision that allowed European immigrants and immigrants from the Americas to sponsor a wider range of relatives. Inserted at the last moment because of a fear that there would be an influx of relatives from India, this clause would be removed five years later in the immigration regulations of 1967.

When the new regulations were implemented on February 1, 1962, Canada became the first of the three large receiving countries in international migration — the others being the United States and Australia — to dismantle her discriminatory immigration policy. In 1975, the United States embarked on a similar course, introducing the Kennedy amendments to the Immigration Act, which came into effect in 1978. Gough Whitlam, the Australian prime minister, abolished the White Australia policy in November 1973 by simply announcing that it was at an end.¹⁰ The new regulations introduced by Mrs. Fairclough before she left the Department of Citizenship and Immigration were foreshadowed by rights that John Diefenbaker presented so proudly in 1960.